

SPECIAL TRAINING COMPONENT, FY 98 BLM

A. Name of Program: Education Award Program

B. Summary of Program Objective: Career development for BLM in Wyoming employees.

The employee proposes the training desired that will facilitate his/her performance of "official duties" in a position commensurate with the employee's potential. Official duties mean those authorized agency duties which an employee is currently performing, or those which he/she could reasonably be expected to perform in the future. This includes potential duties in a different job or occupation at the same or higher level than the one currently held by the employee. Each training proposal is evaluated in terms of BLM workforce and staffing plans. Those proposals which are judged to provide the best potential for using the acquired skills and knowledge at the BLM are approved.

C. Location: All educational opportunities are to be within the commuting area of the recipient's duty station unless there are extenuating circumstances. On-site, correspondence, extension, BLM formal training, or telecommunication classes are acceptable. Normally, funds are not available for travel or per diem expenses; however, employees may choose to use the \$650 to attend one training class, meeting, conference, workshop, or non-Government meeting where the \$650 would be used to pay for travel and per diem. All other sources of education and training require approval of DM's and DSD's.

D. Program Administration:

1. The responsible official is the Employee Development Specialist, Shorty Lowdermilk, in the Wyoming State Office.

2. An Education Award is a grant to an employee in an amount not to exceed \$650. Applicants may request approval for courses up to the \$650 limit. An award may be applied to one class or course, or to a series of classes or courses which continues for more than one semester, term or quarter. The employee does not receive the award as cash, rather the Bureau is billed by the education/training institution or supplier for the direct cost of tuition/books. (Reimbursement for books will be made only after the employee turns the books in to the BLM Library, where they will remain the property of BLM, and after the employee shows that the course was successfully completed.)

The employee must pay for all student activity fees. Courses may be substituted only by written petition to the Employee Development Specialist who must determine that the request for substitution preserves the purpose of the original approval. Only one award may be held by an employee at one time.

Study under a prior award must have been successfully completed before another award can be granted. An employee may obtain career counseling or assistance from the supervisor, Personnel Staff, Employee Development Staff, or EEO Staff. Counseling and assistance will be provided only upon request.

3. An award recipient who accepts employment outside BLM Wyoming, or who changes status so that they no longer meet entrance requirements (Atch. 1, D.4.), forfeits all or any unspent portion of an award. If the employee transfers to another Government office and is taking a correspondence course, the employee will be allowed to finish the course in progress at that time. If the employee is taking a course at the local college, the employee will not have to pay back any tuition if the Government is transferring or moving the employee out of the commuting area, or the employee is separating from the Service.

4. Selection of Participants

a. All participants must:

- (1) Be serving under a career or career-conditional appointment or unlimited excepted appointment.
- (2) Have a current record of service that is satisfactory or better and at an acceptable level of competence.
- (3) Be currently employed in a position that is at or below a GS-11 or WG-11 full performance level.

b. Application process:

- (1) In accordance with instructions in the annual announcement of the program, interested employees should submit an application to the BLM, WSO, Employee Development Specialist, or their District Manager. The application will include the training desired; the background, experience and a narrative discussion of the career goals of the applicant; and a summary of what the projected benefits might be to the employee and the BLM in Wyoming. When more than one course or class is sought, the information must be given for each. The statement should relate the separate classes or courses to one another in terms of the career goal.
- (2) Employees may submit only one application per year.

c. Following the closing date for applications, a panel will be convened in each District and the State Office to review the applications and make recommendations to the District Managers and the State Director. The specific elements for ranking the best qualified will be: demonstrated efforts at self development, Ratings of "excellent," "good," or "poor" will be given under each element for each candidate. Only applicants receiving two or more "excellent" and the third not lower than "good" will be ranked as best qualified.

d. On the basis of all the information that it has, the panels determine by consensus which applicants will be recommended for Education Awards. The recommendations (Attachment 1-2) will be reviewed by the District Managers and the State Director and the final selections made. Awards will be announced by the State Director

e. The recommendation and decision may include a first and second alternate. If an award is forfeited before the program begins, an alternate may be awarded the amount unused by the original recipient, but not to exceed \$650. Participants who leave Wyoming or BLM should notify the WSO Employee Development Specialist, Shorty Lowdermilk, so that the alternate may benefit from the remaining award.

5. Use of an Education Award

a. Use of an Education Award must be initiated within **6 MONTHS** from the date the award is granted. Training or study under an award must be completed within **2 CALENDAR YEARS** from the date training or study began.

Class attendance (or use of correspondence or self-study material) ordinarily will occur outside the person's normal duty hours. In unusual circumstances, recipients may petition their District Manager or Deputy State Director to allow part of the study to take place during normal duty hours. In these cases, supervisors will work with the Branch of Personnel to adopt a solution that will benefit both the employee and the BLM. When uncontrollable circumstance prevent the orderly completion of an award, the provisions of this paragraph may be adjusted by the State Director, Deputy State Director, or District Manager upon petition by an award recipient.

b. When each class or course of instruction has been completed, award recipients must, within 30 days, present their course grade to the Employee Development Assistant, Lois Nordberg (WY-953), who will

document that the training has been satisfactorily completed.

c. Provided the proposed training meets the identified career goal, the employee may request training from any institution or organization, either Government or non-Government, within the commuting area* of the employee's duty station. This also includes study to prepare for a high school diploma equivalency examination. Grants under this program are outside and in addition to training scheduled and approved in the Annual Work Plan.

d. All of the above qualifications and restrictions must be met or the balance of any award may be terminated by the State Director. If anyone cannot pass a class, the money for that class will not have to be repaid. Of course, the candidate will be responsible for the tuition.

*Commuting area restriction applies only to training that requires classroom attendance by the employee for a semester or quarter; there is no restriction on sources from which correspondence courses, self-study material, meetings, conferences, or workshops are obtained.

WHAT KIND OF EDUCATION WILL HELP YOU?

The following is a list of courses which will help you qualify for specific positions at the entry level:

Realty Specialist -	Real estate; regional, urban, rural planning; geography; forestry; geology; business administration; industrial management; engineering; economics; architecture; and accounting.
Outdoor Recreation-	Sociology, forestry, landscaping, architecture, economics, biological science, park administration, earth science, natural resources management and conservation, civil engineering, urban planning or recreation.
Land Law Examiner -	Natural Sciences, (i.e., range conservationist, forestry, geology); or business administration, industrial management, law, engineering, economics, real estate, political science or accounting.
Program Analyst -	Financial management, accounting, personnel management, quantitative analysis, research methodology, inferential statistics, policy analysis, planning and evaluation techniques.
Contract Specialist -	Procurement, business administration, marketing, industrial management or accounting.
Editorial Assistant -	English, English composition, journalism, graphics, library science.
Appraiser -	Appraising, real estate, engineering, architecture, real property management, business administration, economics, agriculture or forestry.
Environmental -	Public administration, political science, Protection Spec. sociology, community planning, economics, environmental studies or geography.
Cartographic -	Combination of cartography, relevant Tech. mathematics and statistical sciences, or closely related science and technology courses.

This list is not all-inclusive of the positions within BLM; it is merely furnished to give you, the employee, an idea of what kinds of positions you may want to use to tailor your career goals.